

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 6, 2015

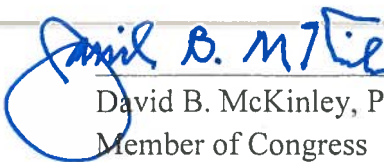
General Carter F. Ham, USA, Ret
National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA)
2530 Crystal Drive, Suite #5000
Arlington, VA 22202


Dear Commissioners:


Thank you for the opportunity to voice some of West Virginia's views on the work the National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) is doing. We recognize that in a difficult fiscal environment and a world with constantly changing threats, modifications to force structure are unavoidable. We only ask that you consider the views and concerns of stakeholders in West Virginia seriously as the Commission moves forward.


Attached you will find input from our own West Virginia National Guard on the work of the Commission.

Respectfully,


David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress


Shelley Moore Capito
Member of Congress


Evan Jenkins
Member of Congress


Alex Mooney
Member of Congress

Information Paper on The Best Strategy to Determine the Optimal Structure for the Army

Introduction: The National Commission on the Future of the Army has the task to determine the optimal structure for the Army within the constraints of shrinking budgets and increasing threats. The Commission's mission can be best accomplished if it embraces new thinking and enables the Total Army capability achieved over the last decade and a half of conflict.

Discussion: Chief of Staff of the Army Milley recently remarked, "there is one Army...we have three components, but there is one Army...in fact, one Army indivisible."ⁱ The Army had a total end strength of 1,045,000 Soldiers in 2015.

In his forward to the 2015 United States Military Strategy, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Dempsey stated, "Today's global security environment is the most unpredictable I have seen in 40 years of service. Since the last National Military Strategy was published in 2011, global disorder has significantly increased while some of our comparative military advantage has begun to erode. We now face multiple, simultaneous security challenges from traditional state actors and transregional networks of sub-state groups – all taking advantage of rapid technological change. Future conflicts will come more rapidly, last longer, and take place on a much more technically challenging battlefield."ⁱⁱ

Despite the recognition of growing threats to the United States along with erosion of our comparative military advantage, the budget proposals that are before the Congress will reduce the Army below a million Soldiers. While budget limitations are real, and, in fact, necessary to the fiscal health of our Nation, there are alternatives to cutting the overall strength of the total Army.

Gen. Milley's remarks about the "indivisible Army" are significant. In the past, the Army's three components (Regular Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve) were treated separately in the budget process. In this approach, components were asked for "fairness" in budget actions, while "the pain" of strength reductions was spread to each. On the surface this approach seems rational, but in Gen. Milley's "One Army", there is a way to maintain the total Army strength while also achieving dollar limits required in the budget process that ignores this "fairness" in order to maintain Total Army capability.

A "rheostat" mechanism can illustrate optional courses of action. In this approach, the rheostat dial can be set with bottom limits on total strength controlled by upper limits on dollar costs. Recognizing that Reserve Component team members have an annual cost approximately 1/3 of Active Component team members,ⁱⁱⁱ the rheostat produces increased Reserve Component Strength and reduced Active Component strength when budget dollars decrease. When budget dollars increase, Active Component strength can increase along with greater readiness in the reserve component.

While the movement between Active to Reserve components are budget driven in this illustration, it is also important to note that, since the purpose of maintaining Total Army strength is to maximize National Military capability in an environment of growing threats, policy and systems supporting Reserve Component Readiness and Mobilization must flex as dependence on them grows. This flexibility can include additional training funds, force structure mixing, and equipment distribution that assure responsiveness.

The attached charts display the “Rheostat” approach in two forms. Chart 1 below displays End Strength options from various Active Component/Reserve Component mixes. These are illustrative, showing that it is possible to maintain a million soldier Army within budget constraints.

Chart 1

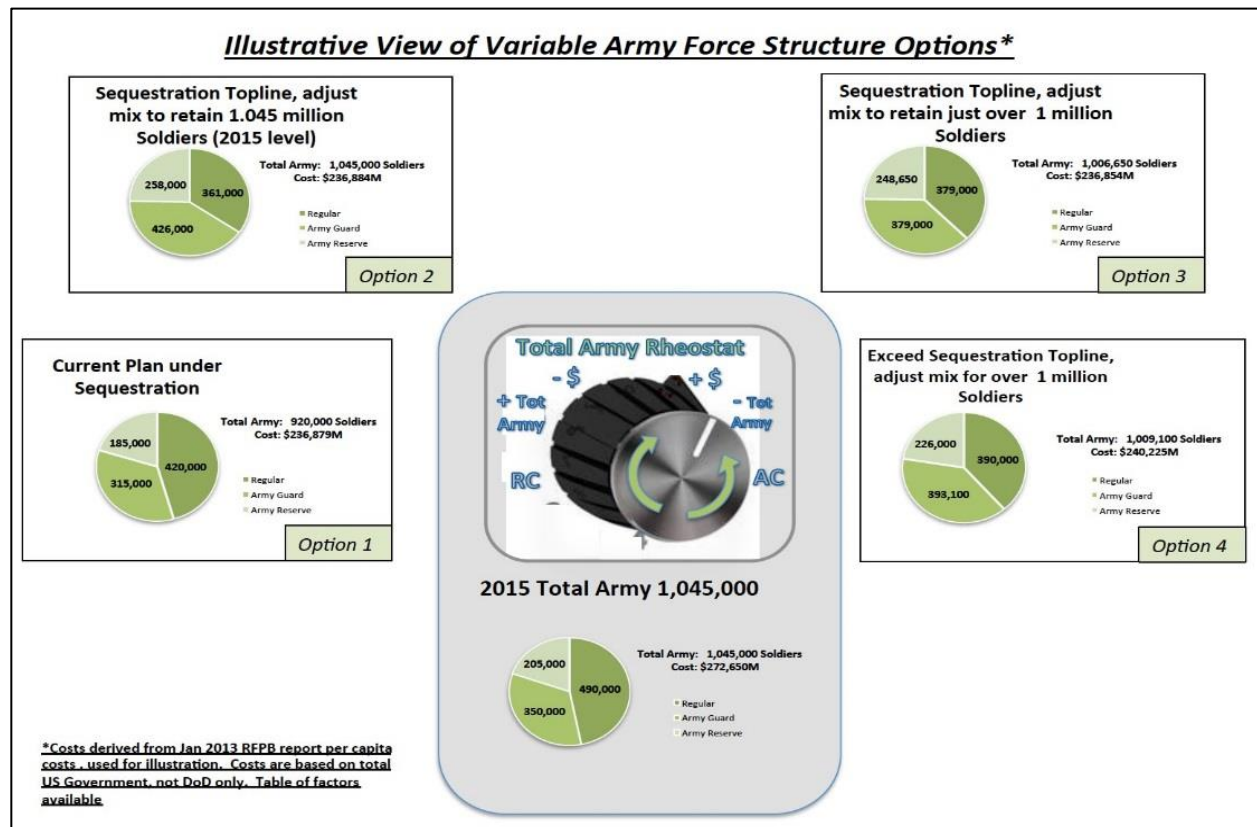
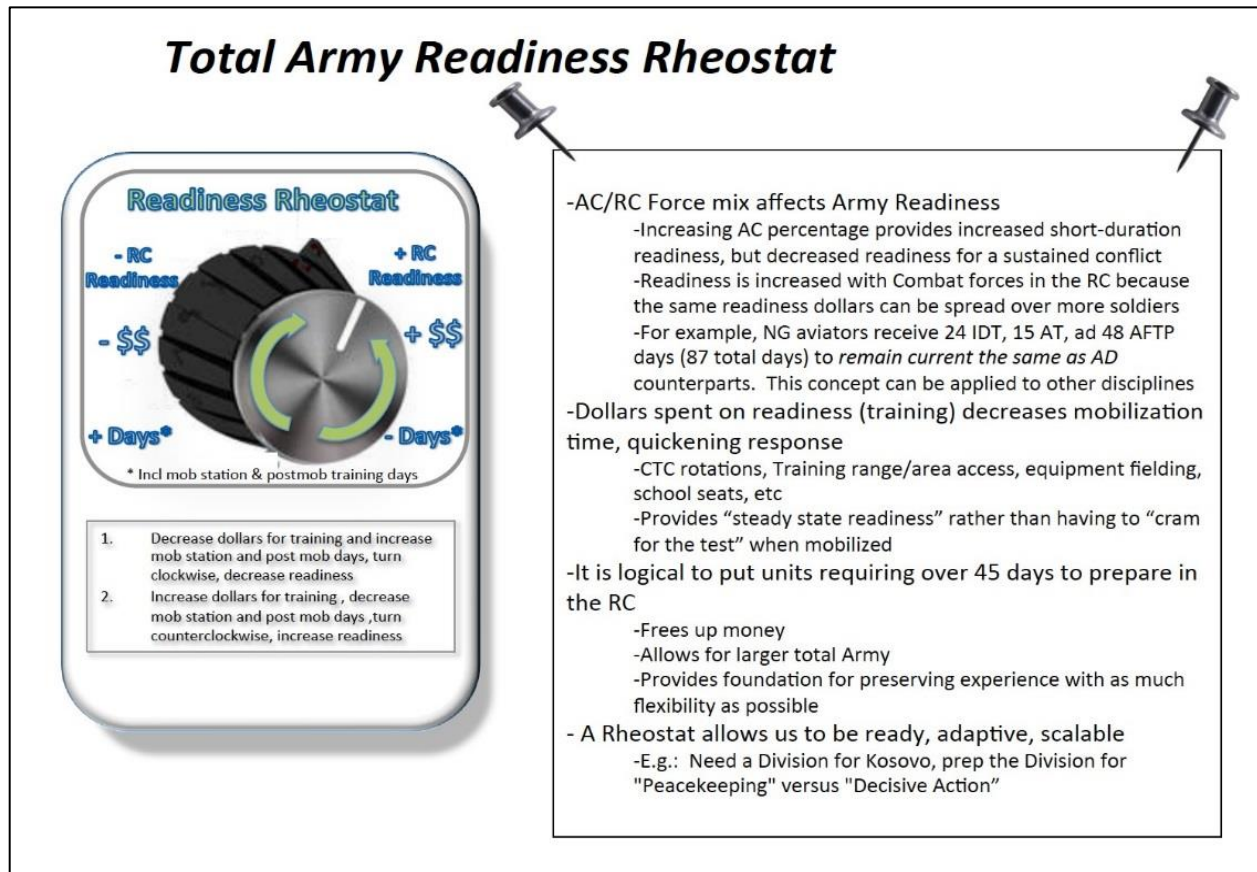


Chart 2 below illustrates the later point, that, in order to sustain National Military Capability when shifting forces from Active to Reserve duty, certain policy and systems must shift as well.

Chart 2



Conclusion: The National Commission on the Future of the Army has a unique and historic opportunity to shift the Army’s focus from component-driven decisions to a singular focus on Total Army strength, ignoring component “fairness” in budget decision in favor of Total Army capability that enables the preservation of a hard-won military capability while simultaneously being responsive to required budget reductions. By “dialing” the right combination of forces within certain limits, Army leadership can focus on policy and systems that will enable a responsive Land Force within any threat scenario.

ⁱ Remarks at the National Guard Association of the United States annual conference in Nashville, TN, 14 September 2015.

ⁱⁱ The National Military Strategy of the United States, June 2015, page i.

ⁱⁱⁱ “Eliminating Major Gaps in DoD Data on the Fully---Burdened and Life---Cycle Cost of Military Personnel: Cost Elements Should be Mandated by Policy”, Reserve Forces Policy Board, 20 December 2013.